Please amend the above-identified application as follows:

In the Claims:

Please cancel claim 2.

Please rewrite the remaining claims in their entirety as follows (the changes in the claims from the previous version to the rewritten version are shown, with strikethroughs for deleted matter and underlines for added matter):

1. (currently amended) A method of provisioning a circuit between at least two terminal points in a communications network comprising a plurality of network segments provided by a plurality of separate network transport suppliers, wherein a facilitator provisions the circuit for a customer, the method comprising the steps of:

obtaining a plurality of network parameter information related to said plurality of network segments provided by said plurality of separate network transport suppliers;

storing said plurality of network parameter information in a database;

receiving a customer request for a circuit between said at least two terminal points;

evaluating said plurality of network parameter information in connection with a plurality of network parameters relating to said customer request;

identifying a subset of said plurality of network segments based on said evaluation of said plurality of network parameter information, wherein

said subset of said plurality of network segments may be linked to form a provisioned circuit between said at least two terminal points in response to said customer request, and wherein said subset of said plurality of network segments is provided by at least two of said plurality of separate network transport suppliers;

linking said subset of said plurality of network segments ~~provided by a plurality of separate transport suppliers, wherein said plurality of network segments is linked via at least one facilitator-controlled exchange facility~~ to form said provisioned circuit between said at least two terminal points; and

providing access to the provisioned circuit to said customer.

2. (cancelled)

3. (currently amended) The method of ~~claim 2~~ claim 1, wherein:

the database is updated to reflect the information relating to available network segments on a real-time basis.

4. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of:

providing a plurality of network parameter options to the customer before the step of linking said subset of said plurality of network segments to form the provisioned circuit.

5. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

identifying at least one customized circuit option; and

providing said at least one customized circuit option to the customer before the step of linking ~~the~~ said subset of said plurality of network segments to form the provisioned circuit.

6. (original) The method of claim 5, wherein:

the step of identifying at least one customized circuit option further comprises the step of filtering a plurality of available circuit options with respect to at least one network parameter provided by the customer.

7. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein:

the customer request is received into an automatic ordering and provisioning system.

8. (original) The method of claim 7, wherein:

the customer accesses the ordering and provisioning system via the Internet.

9. (currently amended) A method of provisioning a circuit as in claim 1, wherein:

~~the~~ said subset of said plurality of network segments are linked using an automated ordering and provisioning system.

10. (currently amended) A The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of:

serving as a party of record with respect to a plurality of service agreements associated with said subset of said plurality of network segments, said plurality of service agreements being provided by ~~said~~

~~plurality of~~ separate transport suppliers that provide said subset of said plurality of network segments.

11. (original) The method of claim 10, wherein:

said customer remains anonymous with respect to said plurality of separate transport suppliers throughout said method steps.

12. (original) The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of:

providing a single point of contact for said customer in connection with billing and circuit maintenance procedures from said transport suppliers relating to said network segments.

13. (currently amended) A method of obtaining a provisioned circuit between at least two terminal points in a communications network comprising a plurality of network segments provided by a plurality of separate network transport suppliers, the method comprising the steps of:

providing a request to a facilitator for a circuit between said at least two terminal points;

receiving at least one circuit option from said facilitator in response to said request, wherein each of said at least one circuit options comprises at least two of said ~~a~~ plurality of network segments provided by at least two of said plurality of ~~from~~ separate network transport suppliers ~~said plurality of network segments being linked via at least one facilitator controlled exchange facility~~; ~~and~~

selecting one of said at least one circuit options for provisioning into

a provisioned circuit; and

receiving access to said provisioned circuit.

14. (original) The method of claim 13, further comprising the step of:

providing the facilitator with at least one preferred network parameter, said at least one circuit option being chosen by said facilitator in accordance with said parameter.

15. (original) The method of claim13, wherein:

the step of requesting the provisioned circuit is performed via an automated ordering and provisioning system.

16. (original) The method of claim 15, wherein:

the automated ordering and provisioning system is accessed via the Internet.

17. (original) The method of claim 14 wherein said facilitator further comprises a software program running on a server.

18. (original) The method of claim 14 wherein said facilitator further comprises at least one human operator.

19. (currently amended) A system for provisioning a circuit between at least two terminal points in a communications network comprising a plurality of network segments provided by a plurality of separate network transport suppliers, said system comprising:

at least one processing server in connection with a plurality of customers;

a database resident on said at least one processing server and

including a plurality of network parameter information related to said plurality of network segments provided by said plurality of separate network transport suppliers, wherein the database is updated on regular basis with a plurality of update information ~~related to a plurality of network segments of a plurality of transport suppliers, and wherein said information~~ is received from said plurality of transport suppliers; and

~~a plurality of exchange facilities in communication with said at least one server for facilitating the linking of the network segments; and~~

logic software resident on said at least one server and in communication with the database ~~and the facilities to automate the linking of said network segments via said exchange facilities to form~~, and programmed to evaluate said plurality of network parameter information in connection with a plurality of network parameters relating to said customer request, and to identify a subset of said plurality of network segments based on said evaluation of said plurality of network parameter information, wherein said subset of said plurality of network segments may be linked to form a provisioned circuit between said at least two terminal points in accordance with the customer request, and wherein said subset of said plurality of network segments is provided by at least two of said plurality of separate network transport suppliers.

20. (original) The system of claim 19 further comprising at least one facilitator for receiving said customer request and interfacing with said logic software.

21. (original) The system of claim 20 further comprising means for evaluating said database information and means for providing a plurality of circuit options in accordance with said customer request.

22. (new) A method of provisioning a circuit between at least two terminal points in a communications network comprising a plurality of network segments provided by a plurality of separate network transport suppliers, wherein a facilitator provisions the circuit for a customer, the method comprising the steps of:

receiving a customer request for a circuit between said at least two terminal points;

evaluating a plurality of network parameters relating to said customer request;

identifying a plurality of available circuit options, each including two or more of said plurality of network segments provided by said plurality of separate network transport suppliers;

providing said available circuit options to said customer;

receiving a customer circuit selection of one of said plurality of available circuit options, wherein said selected circuit option includes a subset of said plurality of network segments provided by at least two of said plurality of separate network transport suppliers;

ordering access to said subset of said plurality of network segments from a subset of at least two of said plurality of separate network transport suppliers;

linking said subset of said plurality of network segments provided by said subset of said plurality of separate network transport suppliers to form a provisioned circuit between said at least two terminal points; and

providing access to the provisioned circuit to said customer.

23. (new) A method of provisioning a circuit between at least two terminal points in a communications network comprising a plurality of network segments provided by a plurality of separate network transport suppliers, wherein a facilitator provisions the circuit for a customer, the method comprising the steps of:

obtaining a first plurality of network parameter information related to a first subset of said plurality of network segments provided by a first of said plurality of separate network transport suppliers;

obtaining a second plurality of network parameter information related to a second subset of said plurality of network segments provided by a second of said plurality of separate network transport suppliers;

storing said first and second pluralities of network parameter information in a database;

receiving a customer request for a circuit between said at least two terminal points;

evaluating said first and second pluralities of network parameter information in connection with a plurality of network parameters relating to said customer request;

identifying a third subset of said plurality of network segments,

including at least one network segment from each of said first and second subsets of said plurality of network segments, wherein said third subset of said plurality of network segments may be linked to form a provisioned circuit between said at least two terminal points in response to said customer request;

linking said third subset of said plurality of network segments to form said provisioned circuit between said at least two terminal points; and

providing access to the provisioned circuit to said customer.